

April 16, 2004

1. School Vending Machines
to Contain Healthier
Beverages and Snacks

Snacks and sodas offered to students in vending machines throughout the school system will be healthier next fall, following a Board of Education review of vending machines and recommendations from Dr. Jerry D. Weast, superintendent of schools.

That means no sodas, less fat and sugar, and an expanded offering of healthier foods in school vending machines during school hours.

The changes follow a recent report from a vending machine work group convened at the recommendation of the Board last October. In December, the Board expanded the charge to the group to review the types of snacks available through vending machines.

The work group reviewed federal and state policies related to the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) health education curriculum, and actions being taken across the nation to combat childhood obesity. Information on the vending machine pilot that began this school year in seven schools was provided, and student input was included.

Beginning with the 2004-2005 school year, beverages sold to students during the school day, either through vending machines or school stores, will meet the following criteria:

- * Container size to be 16 oz. or less.
- * Water.
- * Noncarbonated, flavored water.
- * 100 percent juice.
- * Juice beverages containing 20-50 percent fruit juice in 2004-2005 and a minimum of 50 percent fruit juice thereafter.
- * Isotonic beverages (machines to be located adjacent to physical education facilities).

Vending machines containing sodas will remain off until the end of the school day. Schools also will resume and promote milk vending, with an emphasis on low fat options, in secondary schools.

Snack items sold to students during the school day must meet the following nutritional requirements per single serving, as stated on the food label:

- * Seven grams or less of fat (except for nut and seed mixes).
- * Two grams or less of saturated fat (trans fat is included to the degree it can be determined).
- * Fifteen grams or less of sugar (exceptions are fresh and dried fruits).

Staff will collaborate with suppliers to provide packaging with single servings whenever possible. Refrigerated vending machines will be encouraged to promote a greater variety of choices, including fruits and vegetables.

Although the work group had the specific charge of looking at food and beverages sold to students through vending and the school stores, the recommendations also will apply to food sold to students through the a la carte program in the cafeteria.

The MCPS Division of Food and Nutrition Services will maintain oversight of beverages and snacks sold to students during the day.